

Neighborhoods Focus Area

Introduction:

Tucson is a livable community composed of many healthy and diverse neighborhoods. The City of Tucson can enhance the livability of the community through policies that relate to the human environment, the built environment, and the natural environment. As noted in Tucson's General Plan, "The greatest potential for achieving strong, healthy neighborhoods is through the combined efforts of neighborhood residents, City agencies, schools, and local businesses."



Strategic Policy Statements:

1. *Community Safety and Citizen Participation* - Ensure community safety by improving police and fire staffing levels and developing programs to support them. Establish better communication between government and constituents to improve service delivery and citizen participation.
2. *The Built Environment* - Invest public funding and encourage private investment through partnerships to enhance the appearance and livability of Tucson's neighborhoods. Continue the restoration of public funding to complete or initiate needed infrastructure such as sidewalks, lighting, and public buildings and facilities.
3. *The Natural Environment* - Respect and preserve our natural resources by investing in parks, trails and open space.

1. Community Safety and Citizen Participation – ensure community safety by improving police and fire staffing levels and developing programs to support them. Establish better communication between government and constituents to improve service delivery and citizen participation.

Firefighter Hiring – Hiring and training additional firefighters to staff two new fire stations projected to open January 2005 and to fill vacancies due to on-going attrition will allow Tucson Fire Department to continue providing the community with timely emergency medical and fire suppression services.

Priority Projects:

Geo-based Neighborhood Improvement Initiative – Using a geographically based approach that follows the Tucson Police Department's division boundaries and successful tactical operations planning model, City service providers from multiple departments will meet regularly to refine service delivery and to target priority issues in a collaborative manner. City staff will also emphasize improved communication with constituents and community partners to ensure all neighborhood assets are focused on positive change in a coordinated way. Examples of issues to be addressed under this approach are all items covered by the City's Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance, with special emphasis on vacant and neglected residential properties. The goal will be abatement, rehabilitation or reuse whenever possible.



Police Hiring – Hire 110 Police Officers to bring the department's total number of commissioned personnel to 1,001. This will improve response times to the community's increasing calls for service. Also, hiring 14.5 non-commissioned support positions will respond to the increasing need for forensic support services. A reorganization of the Tucson Police Department command structure will also occur, to insure that there is appropriate oversight and focused attention on critical issues as the ranks of the police department grow.



Fire Safety Inspections – The addition of four inspector positions for both FY 2005 and FY 2006 will allow Tucson Fire Department to increase the inspection cycle for most businesses from once every ten years to once every four years. These positions will allow state-mandated inspection of public, private, and charter schools, and to address other inspection needs. These inspectors will also be key personnel involved in the Geo-based Neighborhood Improvement Initiative listed previously in this plan, working with staff from other departments on critical issues such as vacant and neglected properties.

Work Alternative Program Pilot - Develop a program where citizens who have court ordered fines or sanctions are able to meet their obligation by working on various City department projects in lieu of paying the fines or sanctions. The program, which will start as a pilot program with Department of Neighborhood Resources, involves citizens working directly on projects for various City departments in the areas such as graffiti abatement, parks maintenance, roads and landscape maintenance, clerical support and neighborhood support. If successful, the program will be expanded to other City departments.

Booster Seat Initiative – The Tucson Fire Department is leading an effort for state legislation to require children under the age of eight to ride in child passenger restraint seats. A public-private sponsorship with the City of Tucson and Carondelet Health Network is underway to secure car seats to distribute to low income families.

Coordinated Qualification Process for Services to Low-Income Residents – Development of a standardized citywide process will allow low-income residents to become qualified for waivers or discounts to city services.

Automated Police Report Writing System – Implement an automated system that provides patrol officers with the ability to complete and submit police reports from their patrol vehicles.

2. The Built Environment – invest public funding and encourage private investment through partnerships to enhance the appearance and livability of Tucson's neighborhoods. Continue the restoration of public funding to complete or initiate needed infrastructure such as sidewalks, lighting, and public buildings and facilities.

Priority Projects:

Fire Stations 20 & 21 – Construction of both stations is projected to be complete by the end of January 2005. These two multi-company fire stations will provide timely response to emergency medical and fire suppression services to the north-central and northeast portions of the City, and provide some call volume relief to several fire stations in the vicinity.

Martha Cooper Library – The Board of Supervisors awarded a contract in early November 2004 for the construction of the Martha Cooper Library and Learning Center of the Tucson-Pima Public Library System. Construction will begin in December 2004. This library, which will serve high stressed midtown neighborhoods, is scheduled for completion in summer 2005.

Quincie Douglas Library – This library, which has won an architectural award from the American Institute of Architects for its design, will serve the surrounding high-stress neighborhoods in the Kino-36th Street area. This project is currently under construction and is projected to be complete in spring 2005. The library will open to the public in July 2005.



South Park HOPE VI – The South Park HOPE VI revitalization project is an important part of the City's plans to improve neighborhoods. Nearing completion in early 2005, the project removed or renovated outdated public housing, repaired many existing homes and added new affordable units. The neighborhood also welcomed new sidewalks, curbing and street lighting along with a renovated credit union and increased health services. Local businesses and residents are receiving help through a comprehensive set of economic development actions.

Back to Basics – The citywide infrastructure program will concentrate on providing a menu of project options to participating neighborhoods. An emphasis has been placed on better communication, transparent reporting and timely completion of projects.

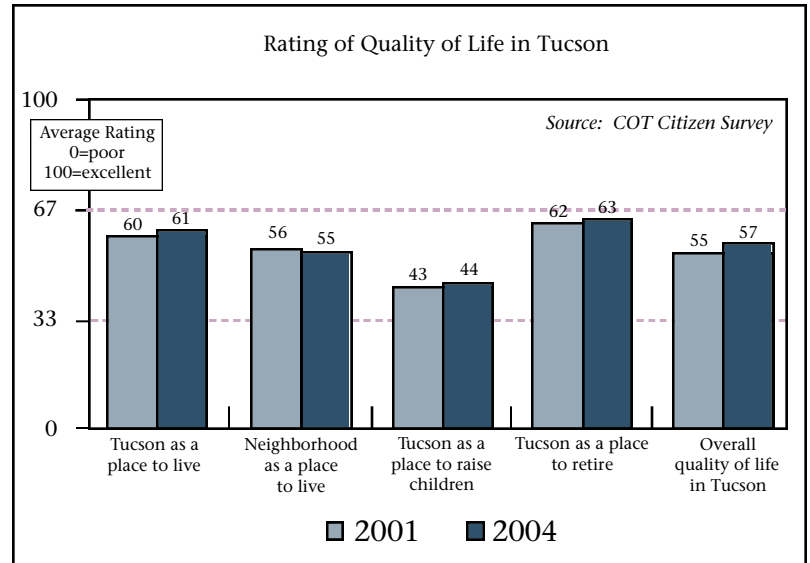
Westside Police Substation capital project – A vacant big-box store has been acquired to relocate the Tucson Police Department Operations Division West Substation and to provide long-needed workspace for other TPD functions. Community meeting space is also to be a part of this building. The first phase of remodeling is set to begin in FY 2005.

Pima County Justice Court/City of Tucson Municipal Court Complex –

As approved by the voters in the 2004 County Bond Election, bond funds have been allocated to design, construct and co-locate a joint city/county court building. This will be one of the largest public buildings in the downtown area. Planning and land acquisition is underway and design of the building is scheduled to begin in July 2005, construction in 2006 and completion of the complex in 2010.

Parks Deferred Maintenance and Facility Improvements

– The Parks and Recreation Department received additional funding in the FY 2005 budget to address deferred facility maintenance. Projects include bleacher replacement at the Rodeo Grounds, re-surfacing of parking lots, replacement playground equipment, Zoo, Hi Corbett, Reid Park improvements and re-plastering one pool.



3. The Natural Environment – respect and preserve our natural resources by investing in parks, trails and open space.

Priority Projects:

Completion of Parks Projects – The Parks and Recreation Department will complete many major capital improvement projects in FY 2005. The Edith Ball Adaptive Recreation Center will open in November in Reid Park and will feature an indoor therapy pool and an outdoor covered recreation pool. Expansions to the existing Udall and Northwest Centers will be complete. Park development projects at Desert Vista, Rita Ranch, Rio Vista, and Udall will be accomplished. Case Park will be completed in FY 2006. In FY 2006, El Pueblo and Clements Center expansions will be finished and a new swimming pool at Quincie Douglas will open.

Tucson Habitat Conservation and Open Space Plan – The City of Tucson was awarded a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The planning area consists of approximately 40 square miles within the southeastern part of the City of Tucson, the Santa Cruz River corridor and specific Tucson Water Department holdings in the Avra Valley. The HCP will contribute to the conservation and recovery of the endangered cactus ferruginous pygmy owl and Pima pineapple cactus. The planning process is an opportunity to comply with the provisions of the Endangered Species Act and identify areas that are appropriate for preservation and for development.